



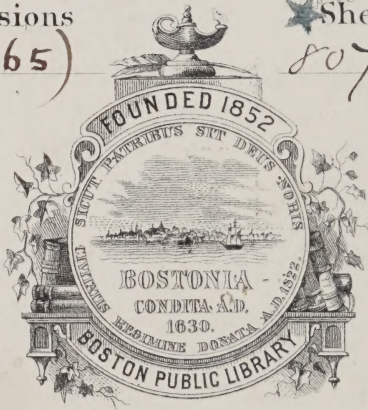
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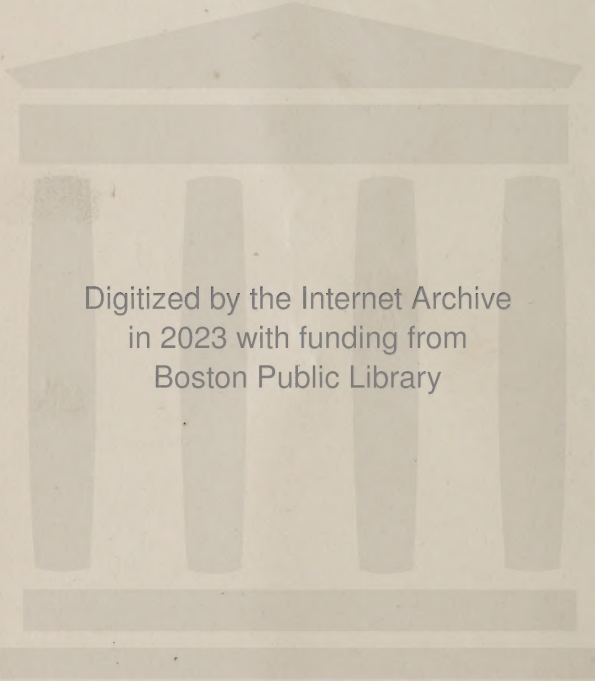
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THE
PRINCIPLES OF ART,

FROM THE STANDPOINT OF

MONISM AND MELIORISM.

A Paper read before the Industrial Art Teachers' Association,
at the Boston Art Club Gallery, Tuesday,
December 29, 1885.

BY

DR. PAUL CARUS.

Ihr Weisen sucht den Schluessel nur
Zum Raethsel dieser Welt!
Ihr sucht umsonst was die Natur
Im All zusam men haelt.

Das einz'ge was die Welt erklart
In ihrer Harmonie,
Das ist die Kunst, die uns belehrt
Durch's Wort der Poesie.

—CARUS, *Gedichte*, p. 21.

PRINTED BY VOTE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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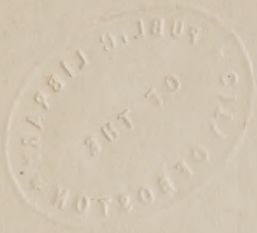
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THE PRINCIPLES OF ART

FROM THE STANDPOINT OF

MONISM AND MELIORISM.

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION 1. *Æsthetics* is the science of *art and artistic principles*; *Art* is the representation of the *Beautiful*, and *taste* is our judgment as to what is beautiful.

SECT. 2. The word *Art* (French, *l'art*) is derived from the Latin *ars, artis*, meaning exactly the same as its English descendant. The root AR denotes a fitting or arranging, as may be learned from the Greek ἀράσσω, *to fit*; ἄρτος, L. *artus, limb*; *artificialus, little limb*; etc. Accordingly, art originally signified something fittingly arranged or the act of harmonious construction.

The German word *kunst* is derived from *können*, and means the ability of doing something. The root KAN is allied to the Scotch *ken*, and German *kennen*; it is connected with the Greek γινώσκειν, Latin *cognoscere*, English *to know*, while in German the biblical word *erkennen* denotes *to beget*; the Greek γονεῖν, *γονή*, English *queen, kin, king* (Old German *kunig*, the chief of his kin), German *kind, könig*, etc., belong to the same root. Thus according to its ultimate source, *kunst* signifies a creative faculty.

The Greek word for art, τέχνη, is derived from τέκτω, *to bring forth*, from which τέκνον, *child*. The words ποιητής, *ποίησις, poet, poetry*, are derived from ποιεῖν, *to make*, a word which also denotes *creating*. The German word *dichter, poet* (of the same origin as the English *dight*), is some one who adorns. The word is of Latin origin, from *dictare*, the frequentative of *dicere, to speak*; and *dictare* means to dictate or speak with emphasis. The northern equivalent, *skald*, is derived from the goblet, as Skandinavian poets sang at carousals where they drank to the honor of their

heroes. The name *bard* is derived from a passage in the *Germania*, where Tacitus says that the Germans called their battle hymns "barditus," a word formerly explained as the *song of bards*, and bards were supposed to be an order of poets and singers. The supposition is bold and has been proved to be wrong. As the term *bard* could not be traced in Old-German it was surmised to be of Celtic origin, signifying a caste like the *Druids*. But there is a more probable explanation. The *barditus* was, as Tacitus says, sung, or rather bawled, into the shield so as to increase the sound. *Bord*, however, was one of the many names of shield. So *barditus*, very likely, means the song of shields. Meanwhile, the word *bard* has been accepted and has acquired literary citizenship.

All these terms (perhaps with the exception of *dichter*, *skald* and *bard*, which are weak) are, in their original meaning, so expressive that there is no commentary remark needed. Art, accordingly, signifies an intellectual creation.

The German word *schoen* is akin to *scheinen* (to beam, glitter, radiate); *schoen* accordingly signifies what is bright and fulgent. The English *beautiful* and the French *beau*, *belle* are derived from the Latin *bellus*, neat, nice; which is an abbreviation of *bonulus*, the diminutive of *bonus*, good.

Καλός is, according to Benfey,* derived from Sanscrit *grīja*, which he translates, *heilsbegabt*, salutary, thus signifying a state of healthiness. The Latin *pulcher* is akin to *fulgere* (to beam, glitter), and accordingly conveys the same idea as the German *schoen*, while the English *sheen* retains its original signification.

SECT. 3. Beauty is a matter of the senses, and, in ordinary language, the term beautiful is applied to an *appearance agreeable to our taste*. *Taste* is arbitrary and personal, and the Latin proverb says, *de gustibus non est disputandum*. Nevertheless we can enunciate a general rule as to what constitutes the Beautiful, although different people, according to the variety of their knowledge and predilections, may apply it differently.

MONISM IN ART.

SECT. 4. At first sight Art seems to be a copying of nature, but this is not quite true; otherwise we could not include music, which is an imitation neither of the song of birds nor of any voices, sounds or noises to be met with in nature.

* Theodor Benfey, *Griechisches Wurzellexikon*, p. 174.

In order to discover the essentials of artistic beauty we must observe how the artist works. The method by which he creates should give us a clew to the problem of artistic production. A painter, for instance, is impressed with the beauty of some idyllic valley, and he paints it. But, although he may copy nature in many of her details, we notice that he makes some slight changes which are almost insignificant; he puts a tree where there is none, or he changes a quiet river into a tranquil lake. In this connection I bear in mind certain instances in which these transformations have been made. In the first case the tree served as a frame to the landscape on one side, while the other was limited by nature. In the second instance the artist had in a preliminary sketch copied nature more faithfully; yet the broad sheet of water in the one corner of the landscape made the picture appear unsatisfactory, and the idyllic surroundings seemed to harmonize more perfectly with a lake. Thus the artist severed his work from its vicinity, and in my opinion he improved it. In these instances the changes were very slight, for the other portions of the pictures remained as in nature. If art were mere imitation such changes would not be legitimate, and the photographer would produce more artistic work than the painter. We must recognize that those insignificant modifications are of greater importance than we primarily realized. We ask the painter why he modifies nature, and he answers: "It is merely to give a roundness to the picture," which means, to harmonize it into a unity. *Unity* is the first and principal rule of æsthetics; and unity should never be neglected in any work of art. A great variety of detail may exist in a picture, but all the subjects must bear a definite relation to each other; they must harmonize, and though they may be in opposition to one another, from a higher standpoint it must be apparent that one could not exist without the other. They complete each other, and would be without sense and meaning if left to themselves.

Art is not a copy of a part of nature, but a representation of nature as a whole. The single work of art, certainly, may depict a detailed segment of it, but this segment must be representative of the entire cosmos; and this is the nerve of true artistic work. Such is music, in spite of the absolute absence of imitation of any objects or phenomena in nature.

We are aware that everything may become an object of art, but this object must be submitted to the rule of unity. Accordingly, the Beautiful, as we would define it, is what constitutes *an harmonious unity*.

The *unity* of a picture is what we term its *idea*; it is the spiritual part or the soul of a work of art, forming its nucleus, out of which all the details grow organically. *Harmony** belongs to the *execution*. It is the visible appearance of the soul showing the omnipresence of the Idea in the several parts of the work. In other words, it is the application of the rule of unity. The idea, alone, can never give value to art; the idea must be visible everywhere; it must be realized, which is impossible unless it be combined with the necessary technical skill. The unity of a picture or its idea (as, for instance, that of a marine view in a storm), if taken by itself, is a mere word, empty and meaningless. The execution, if it is such as to represent faithfully the idea in all its details, with regard to light and shade, the transition from one color to another, and all other particulars, makes the picture beautiful. And you will find that causality plays the same important part in artistic representation as it does in the world at large, which is the prototype of true art. Harmony is produced by attention to causality, and all the variety in a work of art exhibits so many aspects which, the idea being the same, result from a difference of conditions according to the law of causation. The observance of this rule we call correctness, which is indispensable.

SECT. 5. Although causality is the regulator of the arrangement in artistic reproduction, the incidental and unexpected also play an important part, as they do in nature. They give the indescribable charms of *nonchalance* and freedom to the fiction of the artist. Think how effective may be the graceful folds of a dress or other comparative trifles. In a drama incidents or chances are of the greatest consequence, and yet they must not be permitted to overpower or obscure the idea of the whole or to counterbalance and disturb the unity so as to drown the key-note which pervades the work. In "Romeo and Juliet" apparently unexpected and unforeseen accidents cause the deplorable ruin of the unhappy lovers; yet the reason of their destruction is to be found in their unfortunate mental condition. Their deaths are contingent upon the fire of their souls. Both are characters without patience and reflection, who wildly precipitate their fate. Surrounded by danger they are as sure to meet their destiny as is the moth that flutters round the candle. It is ever so in nature. The course of historic events does not depend upon a glass of water, as Scribe, in his comedy, would have us think. On one hand history, in its

* Harmony must not be confounded with symmetry.

development, is the necessary consequence of reasons and laws which govern the evolution of mankind, even while, upon the other, it is full of fortuitous effects. After his dazzling career it would appear that Napoleon the First was vanquished at length by chance. If Blücher, with his Prussians, had not opportunely arrived at Waterloo, it is impossible to forecast the consequences. No doubt the English would have been defeated and Napoleon might have been granted time and opportunity to gain sufficient strength to oppose and overwhelm his numerous enemies. But let us not forget, if this incident had not ruined the insatiable conquerer another would have annihilated him. Napoleon, like Alexander, was one who could never be content. After having conquered the world he would have attacked the stars. And men of such a character must end in inevitable defeat. The poet must introduce his incidents in a manner resembling such occurrences in history. Apparently the causation may be incidental, but the final result must be necessary, and must agree with the central idea.

The application of the law of causality does not exclude from art an impossibility. Fiction, that lovely fairy of Poetry, has a causality of her own; and marvels, though incredible in practical life, are admissible within certain limits in the domain of æsthetics. Nevertheless, it is not an annihilation of causality because every wonder which happens must be associated with some inexplicable power which, like Alladin's lamp, may be favorable or unfavorable, according to the conception and application. It is as a gun is to an Indian, who imagines that his enemy carries the thunder of the Great Spirit in a magic wand. It appears to be supernatural because it is incomprehensible, as the miracles of magnetism and electricity were to the people of yore. Thus, spirits, ghosts and goblins, wizards and witches, with their spells-amulets and talismans, are not at all objectionable in fiction, although they have to depend on causation, and wherever they exist the whole atmosphere must agree with their supernatural character; but this is the domain of fairy tales, legends, sagas and similar subjects, which are only of collateral interest to our theme.

case of The imaginary personages of fairy tales must not be confounded with the apparitions conjured ^{up} by an evil conscience. The latter occurs to Macbeth, who imagines he beholds Banquo's wraith at the carousal. Neither ~~has it~~ to do with a sad presentiment of some dreadful deed; such as that which causes Hamlet to see his ather return from the grave. In either case the poet is serious,

and does not mean to play carelessly with fictitious powers. The witches in *Macbeth* represent a form of supernatural temptation, suggested through the general's rapid success, and too strong for his power of resistance. A demoniacal allurements sways the mind of the victorious chief, who, elevated by the idea that he is the favorite of fortune, fancies he is capable of accomplishing everything. The scene of the carousal where Macbeth sees the ghost of the murdered Banquo is as realistic as the morbid mental condition of Lady Macbeth when her disturbed spirit stirs her to walk about in dreams and try to wash the blood from her hands.

Hamlet, with his philosophic grasp and clear mind, could judge from facts that some terrible crime had been committed. He was told the story of the serpent's sting in the garden, and could almost, by simple deduction, conclude the horrible truth. Yet he shrinks from accusing his very nearest kin of so dreadful a deed; and his distracted mind, in spite of himself, depicts the sad truth before his mental eye by the vision of his late father, who cannot find rest. It is not Hamlet the King who wanders restless in the midnight hours, but Hamlet the son, mad with a sad foreboding of his uncle's crime. There is no doubt that, under such circumstances, spirits may manifest themselves to our mental vision, although in reality and objectively they do not exist, but are produced by the diseased disposition of a distracted and broken mind. In accordance with this statement I cannot coincide with Shakespeare's rendering of the witches' scene in *Macbeth*, or the scene of the midnight watch on the platform before the Castle of Elsinore, in which there are other eye-witnesses of the apparitions. There should be no other people present, or, if there are any people present, they ought not to see the ghost. So it is in the carousal scene in *Macbeth* (III., 4), and in the scene in the Queen's bed-chamber, in *Hamlet* (III., 4). A man who holds intercourse with the incorporeal air and bends his eye on vacancy must impress one as a madman, or at least as being disturbed in, or out of, his mind. An evil conscience whose warning voice is sternly suppressed and the pre-
 sage of evils which we do not want and refuse to believe take such shapes in dreams and visions. In artistic representations they must be reproduced, for the sake of vividness, with a realism similar to that with which they appear to the affected person. But in a serious drama visions should not introduce any contradiction to nature, unless, as in *Faust*, the whole conception breathes a mythological atmosphere.

Miracles are out of place where they are introduced for the purpose of proving the supernatural. In *Faust* we take them as a matter of course, while we are disgusted with the ostentatious marvels, for instance, which are displayed in *Kaethchen von Heilbronn*, one of the masterpieces of Romantic poetry. Those who believe in the reality of spirits may be delighted to imagine themselves face to face with a guardian angel; but when his existence must be regarded as being peremptorily forced upon our credulity, his appearance is irreconcilable to a classical taste.

SECT. 6. In nature everything, man himself included, is only a part of the universe. But you can isolate anything from its surroundings and then it may form a smaller unity in itself. In such a case we recognize it as a little world in itself, a microcosm. A common saying among mediæval sages was that man is a microcosm. I think *Pico di Mirandola*, in his *Heptaplus*, a cabalistic book, used for the first time the expressions *macrocosm* and *microcosm*, within the Fifteenth century. And certainly the term "microcosm" may be applied to man more truly and to a higher degree than to aught else, as verily he is a world in himself. But in a broader sense it is also true of the meanest creature that exists, and the idea of the all-comprehending cosmos lives also in a fly, and even governs the formation of the inanimate crystal. This completeness in the simplest and minutest parts is what we call the harmony of the world, and causality, the irrefragible law of necessity, is the formula under which we comprise and comprehend this universal tie which binds all things together, though, of course, the unity is inherent or from within, and not imposed upon the world from without. If we compare it to the soul animating the body, it is but a simile; if we call it the Divine in the Natural, Spirit in Matter, or God in Nature, it is but a poetic expression, an attempt to formulate the unfathomable depth of an undeniable truth in religious or metaphysical terms. Numerous allegories of a similar nature are intended to convey the same sentiment, as when Schelling says "the Idea in its Realization;" Hegel, "The Absolute in its Evolution;" and when Schopenhauer uses the phrase, "The Will in its Objectivation." They are only endeavoring to express the idea that the wonders of the world, as well as the works of art, are but visible representations of what they are invisibly. An object, in order to be artistically treated, has to become a microcosm, and as the makrocosm is a unity that displays its idea by an orderly evolution, so the microcosm must show, or at least indicate, the same

qualities. The rule of unity is the monistic tendency, while the display of progress and evolution answers to the principle of meliorism.

SECT. 7. Beauty is manifested wherever an harmonious unity is intuitively perceptible and sensuously communicated. Wherever we perceive it, we are charmed and delighted, as though we were seized with an invisible, a supernatural, exaltation, which can only be explained metaphysically. *Kant*, in his *Critique of Judgment*, makes an ingenious synthesis about art and nature: "Nature is beautiful," he says, "when it appears as as if it were art; and art is only beautiful if, while we are conscious that it is art, it appears to us as if it were nature."

Kant indicates rather than expresses the relations between the beauty of nature and of art. Nature, as a whole, is not an object of perception; consequently a philosophical conception of the universe only can impress us with its beauty. However, if the parts of nature are arranged effectively, as an artist would combine them, to form a unity in themselves, we regard them as being beautiful; they are capable of being converted into a picture or other expression of our artistic wants. On the other hand, works of art are expressions of which we can prove the correctness only by a comparison with nature.

When Nature produces a unity, as, for instance, an organism, we invariably recognize the beauty of fitness and harmony; and when, as in views or vistas, such unity is produced incidentally we are reminded of art. It is not so essential, however, that an artistically beautiful subject should possess a real unity as that it should impress us with the idea of an harmonious whole. Its integral parts must be arranged in such a manner as will awaken in the spectator the conception of beauty; and thus Art teaches us the method of discovering and appreciating the beauties of nature.

MELIORISM IN ART.

SECT. 8. The melioristic tendency of the macrocosm is best seen in the later stages of its evolution, in man. Man is the most highly developed creature, and therefore he is that being in which progress is most marked. The world, accordingly, would be empty and meaningless without him. He is the essential part of the universe, revealing its inmost secret principle. Therefore, in the microcosm as produced by art, man must not be missing, and no production of art should be without a representation of human

feeling, sentiment or aspiration. Man, to be sure, seems to be absent in pictures of flowers and landscapes, but human suffering, hope, or longing, are hidden and inscribed in its petals; and if we look at and in landscapes of painters, here a deep melancholy lours in the clouds of the sky, and there a serenity of mind is depicted in the quiet surface of an idyllic lake. No man is to be seen, but a gondola riding on the rippling water near the landing tells us of happy hours which human beings have experienced. Sometimes the rarer such vestiges of humanity are, the more attractive the picture appears to us.

A good work of art has something to tell, and those who wish to enjoy it must have the patience to decipher and the sensibility to understand its language. The real artistic and idealistic value of a masterpiece may be measured by what we add to the subject. The strength and vigor of an artist depends upon his power to stir the spectators' imagination and to make them unravel and reconstruct his idea. A true piece of art is always *suggestive*; it stirs our fancy and forces us to complete what the artist has merely indicated.

Thus a human sentiment and aspiration which are but hinted at become more vivid, because they are transferred into the spectators' souls. It touches them more than if it had been materially represented to their eyes, for the artist in such a case has succeeded in painting his picture not upon the cold canvas but upon the warm human imagination. This explains the fact that artistic works sometimes lose their charm when they are elaborately finished. They are no longer suggestive. Everything which can be conceived is rigidly represented, and nothing is left to be developed by the imagination. Thus, also, short, simple ballads are often more impressive than tedious and detail-encumbered epics. The latter tell all, and do not leave any scope or work for our imaginative powers, while the former suggest and stir up our sympathy and affection. This property of *suggesting* is the *true touchstone of real art*. A flower may be painted with the same diligence for botanical instruction as for some artistic purpose. The painting is artistic if it touch our feeling in any manner. Withered flowers make us feel melancholy and gloomy; dead nature, or, better called by the Dutch expression, "still life," evokes a contemplative sentiment. A vase containing roses and tulips, with some grapes, berries, or a few pears before it, and a Rhine wine glass standing near it, reminds us of the idyllic feast of a birthday. The unconscious beauty and the absence of selfishness in flowers charms

our fancy and awakens our sympathy. Shallow as such relations may be, compared with grander and more profound subjects, yet they are what they assume—works of art in relation to and connected with human life and activity. Art is essentially *human*, because this is the highest and most indispensable sphere of the macrocosm, and cannot, accordingly, be omitted in a microcosm.

An artist in Germany, on the ground of scientific investigation, once painted an imaginary landscape in the moon. The moon has no atmosphere, and consequently there is neither dawn nor twilight; neither is there any transition from light to darkness. The shadow of a mountain is a deep, impenetrable black and, close by, divided but by a mathematical line, is the white, radiant flow of the bright sunbeams. All color is absent, and the only variety is the weaker disc of the earth which, in the shape of a giant orange, appears in the lunar sky with a diameter thirteen times greater than the moon appears to us. Such a picture is an illustration to show what the moon is like. It is no work of art. Introduce into this view even the axe which the celebrated Münchhausen threw to our satellite, or put in an enchanted princess from any fairy tale of our own world, or the very man of the moon himself, and everything is changed. It excites our imagination; we accompany Münchhausen or the man of the moon through the dreary deserts, which become, despite their dreariness and their inhospitability, the theatre of human action, and, lo! the picture is a work of art.

SECT. 9. ^{those} The different arts have been divided into those of space and time. The arts of space are architecture, sculpture and painting; while the arts of time are music, dancing, song and poetry. The combined arts of Space and Time are the mimic dance, as the modern ballet; the opera and the drama. It is not inopportune to call to mind *Lessing's Laocoon*, in which he defines *the limits of poetry and painting* in a manner which has not been improved. According to his views, the arts of space deal with coexisting materials which produce permanent and visible beauty, while the arts of time refer to successive and transitory impressions of sound, sentiment or motion. We may assume that Lessing's fundamental inquiry, which is stated with classic lucidity, is generally known. From the above premises, at present, it is only necessary to indicate his views, that the arts of space represent or depict bodies, and that they do not show progressive action, but they may indicate and suggest action by choosing as the moment of representation the most pregnant state of things,

from which we may infer how it was a few seconds ago and what will happen immediately. On the other hand, the arts of time should not be descriptive. It is *ingeniosius quam verius* to say that painting is silent poetry and poetry a painting in words. As soon as the poet commences to describe, he grows tedious. If he want to describe, he should translate the description into his vernacular, that is, into words expressing action. Homer does not give us a description of the accoutrement of Menelaus, but tells us how the hero arms himself. We see the king assuming each portion of his armor, and he stands forth to our imagination a more vivid picture than an artist could portray with his brush. Progress is the property of time, and therefore the arts of time *must be progressive*, that is, they must represent action.

The arts of space form corporeal unity; they are predominantly monistic; and beauty, in the more limited sense of the word, refers to an harmonious unity perceptible to the eye. A poem, a drama, or a sonata is not visible, and should not have the term "beautiful" applied to them. They may be *good*, which means that they form an harmonious unity of progress, and thus they are predominantly melioristic. They depict aspirations or desires, advancement, improvement, or any progressive motion; and the term "good" implies, to a certain extent, in the same manner as does meliorism, a moral property. The close connection of ethics with art results from and must be comprehended by this fact. The *beautiful* and the *good*—forming in their combination the Greek ideal of the *καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν*—are the two points of abutment on which art rests. Both are indispensable. Although the one naturally sways the more sensual and the other the more intellectual arts, they must be present in each, and for this reason it must be conceded that it is not just to be too rigid with the definitions of the good and the beautiful. It is allowable to call a picture good and a poem beautiful, especially as the arts of space suggest progress, and the arts of time awaken in our minds ideas of objects.

SECT. 10. The rule of unity has to be observed also in the temporal arts. In dance and music it is a unity of motion or rhythm, and in a drama the unity of action. And it is again the rule of unity which occasionally makes the poet alter the facts which he selects as the materials of his fiction. If a dramatist is using certain historical events as the basis of a tragedy, there are at his disposal in the chronicle accounts some incidents the causes of which are external. He has to eliminate what is not contained

in the central idea, while he has to introduce what is wanted to complete it and to make it lucid; otherwise his drama would only be a fragment of history, but not a cosmos, a unity in itself.

History relates that, in Genoa, an ambitious nobleman, Fiesco, conspired with other malcontents, among whom was his friend Varina, a sincere republican. They succeeded in expelling the Doge, their sovereign, and Fiesco, relying on his popularity and his alliance with France, declared himself the duke. That very night, after he had accepted the purple and the crown, stepping into the ducal galley, he slipped and fell into the muddy water, where, dragged down by his heavy armor, he miserably perished before he could be rescued by his servants. Schiller has dramatised this event; but he changed it slightly: When Fiesco and Varina arrive at the harbor, Varina, once more, and for the last time, conjures Fiesco, his former friend, to throw off that heinous purple. Fiesco refuses, and then they proceed to embark, Fiesco, as the duke, leading the way; Varina, immediately following, pushes him into the water, and thus removes a tyrant. No doubt the fate of the historic Fiesco, that overbearing usurper, was sealed even if he had not perished by accident, especially as we are convinced that the Emperor Charles the Fifth never would have suffered a friend and ally of France to occupy the throne of Genoa. Yet, as Schiller does not relate the whole political history of Fiesco's time, as there are effects produced by causes which are without the range of his object of representation, he brings in another motive which lies within the circle of the drama, and makes the final result the necessary outcome of the idea of the whole. The doom of Fiesco, according to Schiller, depends upon his boundless ambition and Varina's love of freedom. Schiller, by such an alteration, may not have improved history, no more than any artist is likely to improve upon nature; Schiller has merely rounded his work of art so as to form a drama of what was a part of history; and what has in history the appearance of casualty has become the outgrowth of the tendencies of the acting persons. The situations in a drama may be produced by chance, but the doom of the hero, as well as his actions and sufferings, must be contingent upon his character, who, as Germans say, is "the smith of his own fate."

SECT. 11. The three chief stages of psychological growth are designated by the three views of life: 1, *optimism*; 2, *pessimism*; and, 3, *meliorism*.

The human being in his youth is optimistic; but when a man encounters the worldly evils, when care preys upon him, sorrows

worry him, and want and illness harrass him, when the solemnity of death impresses his soul with fear of the unknown future, then a crisis arises in the psychical development: the catastrophe of a pessimism destroys the optimistic delusions of early years, and it is but with heartrending struggles that man regains the lost balance of his aspirations in establishing a purified, a higher view of life which we call *meliorism*. The highest temporal art represents man as struggling after and aspiring to this ideal; it exhibits the development from a naïve existence through the crucial test of evil, error and failure; through misery and terror of death to the conscious and manly standpoint of meliorism. Such a representation is the tragedy. The tragedy is a drama in which the action is solemn and the catastrophe grave. It is not essential that the hero should die, but it is necessary that he should pass through a process of trial and purification. Thus the hero has become another man. In spirit he is new-born, and takes a new and deeper view of life and its relativities. The crisis of pessimism has matured his mind, and even should he die, his ideal lives; vanquished, his ideal is victorious!

In this manner the doctrine of meliorism sheds a new light on Tragedy and explains most clearly the complete sense of the the Greek term, *katharsis*, or purification of the hero, which Aristotle teaches us to be the purpose of a tragedy. This *katharsis* should be infused into the souls of the audience through the medium of *pity and fear* (*δὲ ἔλεου καὶ φόβου*): pity for the hero and fear in the auditor for himself lest he may meet with the same fate. The audience should be led through the same ordeal of purification and, without absolute suffering, but merely by witnessing that of the hero, they attain a higher, a purer, and a more ideal conception of life. It is the destruction of the egotistic passions (*καθάρσις τῶν παθημάτων*) and the construction of a lofty philanthropic temple of altruism. In listening to a tragedy we are overawed; our souls are full of sentiment which is best expressed in the ecclesiastical term of *edification*.

According to Schopenhauer and his pessimistic adherents, the purpose of a tragedy is to preach pessimism; the hero has to turn his back upon life. In the school of misery he must learn to resign and deny his will. Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Mainländer declare that negation of will is the only aim worthy of religion and philosophy. It is this negation which the tragedy has to exhibit. But Schopenhauer did not find one instance among the ancient tragedies in which the hero really denies his

will. Ajax commits suicide in order to atone for his errors, yet there is nothing of negation of will. Neither is it to be found in Œdipus. Hippolytos when dying is consoled by Artemis, who promises, after his death, to bestow upon him the highest honors in Thebes. From these instances Schopenhauer does not conclude that his theory is wrong, as probably Lessing would have done, to whom the ancients were the standard of good taste; he argues that classical tragedy is shallow and inferior to the Christian dramas, which rank higher owing to the fact of their heroes expiring with enthusiasm. The conclusion is just, because they sometimes rush into death with the confidence of finding a higher and a happier existence in another world. We should not, however, call this a pessimistic negation of life. They love life, but they prefer eternity. It is the aspiration toward some higher state of existence which allures them to their fate. I do not know of any pessimistic tragedy, except the operas of Wagner, and particularly *Die Götterdämmerung*, in which Wodan terminates the existence of the world, and, tired of life, he commits suicide. Wagner, strongly biased by Schopenhauer's philosophy, intentionally created his works in a pessimistic spirit; he is an exception. Dramas by other poets are free from pessimism, as, for instance, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Faust*, *Egmont*, *Marie Stuart*, *Wallenstein*; the minds of the chief characters exalted by their sufferings even to death, are elevated to a higher range. They do not attain a negation of will or annihilation of the ideal to which they aspire. In a word, our standard tragedies are melioristic and not pessimistic; for, otherwise, in their development, we should miss the solace which alone is able to afford us consolation for the misfortunes of our heroes.

The auditors profit by the experience of the hero. We grow spiritually, intellectually and morally, while he grows through his struggles. What he gains in breadth of his mental grasp and in intensity of his feeling, we also gain. The purification of our souls, the intellectual and moral gain, in one word, the growth of our minds, is what exerts a beneficial influence and constitutes the pleasure of listening to a tragedy; for all growth is a pleasure: it is the only solid pleasure in life.

Schiller finds "*the cause of the pleasures we derive from tragic objects*" in "our admiration of moral propriety, which is never more vividly recognized than when it is found in conflict with another propriety and still keeps the upper hand." Schiller says: "We here [in some tragedy] see the triumph of the moral law so

sublime an experience for us that we might even hail the calamity which elicits it;" and, further on: "How noble to violate natural interests and prudence in order to be in harmony with the higher moral law. If, then, the sacrifice of life be the way to do this, life must go." Schiller's explanation is profound and grand, but I differ from him in hailing the calamity which elicits the triumph of the moral law. I do not believe that any one can hail calamity as the cause of a sublime experience. But in growing we must ultimately encounter the catastrophe and endure the hour of trial. It cannot be evaded by any one who is arriving at maturity. Our mental development starts from optimism, and, passing through the inevitable crisis of pessimism, it reaches perfection in the haven of meliorism.

This is the key-note which thrills through the universe and vibrates in every true work of art or fiction.

CONCLUSION.

SECT. 12. Art is no mere trifling and playing, attractive and charming as its works may be. Its object is grand and serious, and it has no lesser aim than has science.

Art and science both reveal the secrets of nature, but they adopt different methods. While science inquires into the various provinces of nature under the guidance of induction and deduction, art, intuitively grasping the idea of the universe and representing it in single examples, gives a clew to the enigma of the world. With regard to this, the Romans called a poet *vates*, seer or prophet. The poet is a priest of humanity. And, truly, of every real artist and poet one must aver, as Goethe makes Wilhelm Meister say about Shakespeare, "It is as though he revealed all the secrets of life, and yet one can not define his method of solving the riddle."

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